

ON THE RISE HORIZON

NEBRASKA STATE PROBATION

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RISE

Rural Improvement for Schooling and Employment

Evidence-based Practices & RISE:

By Tyson Jenkins, Administrative Office-Lincoln



Evidence-based Practice (EBP) is an approach for criminal justice programs involving the ongoing critical review of research, to determine which programs and services are best suited utilizing evidence. It is through these core EBP values that the RISE Program's success is achieved and upheld through its curriculum.

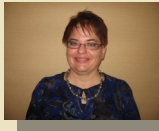
The goal of the RISE Program is to reduce the recidivism of Nebraska probationers through improving education and employment opportunities in areas of rural Nebraska. Through the use of EBP the RISE Program has succeeded towards this goal, and its results, in the collected program data. Over the last five years the RISE program has seen its graduates non-recidivism rate one year after curriculum completion climb to an astonishing 80%.

It is through the use of EBP and its various tools that the RISE Program Specialists see both success in their participants, and verification of the program curriculum through a data driven methodology.

In this issue of *On the Horizon*, RISE Specialists across the state account for their use of EBP and the principles used in effective interventions within their districts.

Motivational Interviewing and Self-Change:

By Katie Rea, McCook
Alayna Romeo, Lexington



Through the use of motivational interviewing (MI) RISE Program Specialists get to know each participant very well, and use this knowledge to determine what stage of change the client is in. They then use this information to determine when the client is ready and able to take action towards positive self-change.

As with many RISE participants, a probationer in McCook was experiencing great difficulties obtaining employment. His general appearance was untidy, his head was down, he would shuffled his feet when he walked, and never made eye contact when conversing. Due to the many job rejections he had received in the past, he had developed a negative, self-defeated attitude, that corresponded with his external appearance. Being unaware of his internal and external attitude and appearance, MI interviewing techniques were used with open-ended questioning, allowing for him to realize the need for self-change, and take it upon himself to take proactive steps to facilitate it.

Two weeks later the beginnings of self-change was apparent in both his attitude and appearance. He strode with eagerness and pride as he shared the news of his new found employment, his head held high to correspond with her new found self-worth.

As RISE Program Specialists it is most gratifying to see self-change in our RISE participants, and it is through techniques such as MI, that these effects become most apparent.

Targeted Interventions:

By Leisa Maranell, Blair
Jessica Spors, North Platte
Allie Hansen, Fremont
Sam Carman, Nebraska City



The RISE program focuses on two of the main reasons for recidivism, a lack of employment and a lack of education. RISE Program Specialists use their curriculum to provide skills and support to this target intervention.

The RISE Program does this by teaching important skills that can be used throughout a person's life time, such as: creating a resume and cover letter, learning appropriate employment dress, and what sort of behavior is expected by employers after being hired. RISE Program Specialists help probationers in accessing the information they need to continue on with their education by helping them through the process of completing their GED, giving information on student-aid, describing college course options, and/or providing information about colleges in their areas. During the first few group sessions, RISE Program Specialists help probationers develop appropriate goals, identify and understand their specific barriers, access their motivation types, and determine their learning styles. Group will usually take approximately an hour of the participant's day; however, assignments given at the end of each chapter allow continued practice and additional structured time for the RISE participants.

The RISE Program and its Specialists are continually keeping statistics on the district progress by tracking: grades, behavior, active employment, continued education, and recidivism rates. By doing this, The RISE Program and its Specialist are able to determine if RISE is a reliable, effective program. RISE participants are also exposed to a pro-social relationship by their interaction with their RISE curriculum. The support and willingness to get to know each participant not only helps form this positive relationship, it also helps to collect more complete qualitative data. To date, the RISE program continues to show its effectiveness and is an appropriate and productive targeted intervention for many probationers.



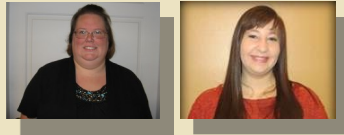
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Skill Train with Direct Practice and Providing Positive Reinforcement:

By Kim Wimberly, Lincoln/Wahoo
Sarah Ryba, Columbus



In order to facilitate and observe the desired RISE Program goals, it is necessary that the RISE Program and its Specialists are properly trained in the skills needed to be successful. This training allows for strategies to be implemented in conjunction with the program curriculum that adhere to positive reinforcement models.

The RISE Program maintains the ideal of proper skill training by giving the support and practice necessary to ensure that its service members have all the toolsets needed for program success. RISE Program Specialists receive training in EBP approaches, Motivation Interviewing techniques, curriculum facilitation strategies and practices, along with the opportunity to participate in relevant training with outside entities.

With this skill training in practice, RISE Program Specialist facilitate groups addressing barriers to employment and education through positive reinforcement. RISE Specialist demonstrate change by modeling appropriate behavior and social interactions, and help facilitate the desired change with praise and incentives. Change through positive reinforcement is addressed through: barrier identification, skills assessment, practice in writing resumes and letters of explanation, mock interviews, and addressing employers expectations. Similarly educational needs and deficiencies are acknowledged and reinforced in a positive manner by demonstrating and exhibiting the educational resources within the given community. The culminating act of recognition through positive reinforcement is presented as graduation ceremonies and recognition in many RISE area districts. This final demonstration of support reinforces the goals and achievements for each participant and their RISE Specialist.

Proper and relevant skill training allows for RISE Specialist to modify and address employment and educational deficiencies in probationers, and allows for the Specialists to target them in a manner that coincides with positive reinforcement techniques to solicit the desired behavior change.

Providing Ongoing Support, Measuring Relevant Processes, and Providing Measureable Feedback:

By Jackie Trotter, Grand Island
Kim Bovee, South Sioux City
Isabel Camacho, Kearney
Tegan Gormon, Hastings



In order to ensure that the desired change within an individual is maintained, a proper and applicable support structure must be in place. The RISE Program provides and creates this support structure for its graduates by creating and maintaining lasting networked relationships and resources within the community. These structures include employer relations, local educational institutions, and the community resources available to affirm and provide continual support for the probationer after completing the RISE curriculum.

EBP is founded upon the ideal of measuring outcomes to validate its processes. The RISE Program employs several mechanisms to record and analyze the effectiveness of its processes and goals. RISE Program Specialist track employment and educational statistics regarding its participants, as well as conducting three and six month follow up support surveys used to track probationer post-graduation success. The RISE Administrative Support and Program Director then compile the data to determine program success and identify and address deficiencies or needs.

Measured feedback regarding the RISE Program's processes and practices is shared with the program participants, at the district level, and the program's parent organizations. Data such as enrollment numbers, graduation rates, recidivism statistics, and performance measurements are shared with the Program Specialist, their appropriate district support staff, and are reported to its program provider ServeNebraska and AmeriCorps/CNCS. Mid-year and End-Year meetings of both the Program Specialists and their direct line supervisors allow for a free sharing of this data, and allows for the celebration of successes and the identification of needs and service related deficiencies.